



# LEWIS & CLARK CITY-COUNTY Health Department

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Testimony of Lewis & Clark City-County Health Department

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EXHIBIT

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DATE

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HB

623

## **HB 623: An Act increasing the reimbursement rate for targeted case management services for high-risk pregnant women and children with special health needs**

Mr. Chair and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in favor of House Bill 623, a bill that increases the reimbursement rate for targeted case management services for high-risk pregnant women and children with special health needs.

Medicaid Targeted Case Management services to high-risk pregnant women and children with special health care needs are provided by registered nurses and professional social workers through health department home visiting programs. The proposed increase in reimbursement rate will increase the ability of home visiting programs to provide these needed and cost effective services.

**Rate structure set in early 90's.** The current rate structure of \$6.00/15 minute unit for pregnant women and \$10.00/15 minute unit for children with special health needs has been in place for over 20 years. The cost to provide these services has increased dramatically while the reimbursement rate has remained stagnant. In no other healthcare setting are rates so low.

**High quality preventive health services to a vulnerable, high-risk population.** Home visiting teams-RNs and social workers – make a difference for infants and children. They help prevent premature births and the needless tragedy of children afflicted with life-long problems because their mothers used drugs and alcohol when they were in utero. They help families parent well so they can provide their children with the foundation for a healthy and productive life.

**Cost effective:** The return on investment is \$5 saved for everyone \$1 invested in a quality home visiting program according to Nurse Family Partnership studies. The Pew Charitable Trust reports that home visiting programs reduce child abuse and neglect by almost 50%, reduce low birth weight births by nearly half (Pew estimates savings of \$28,000 to \$40,000 for every one averted), and help children build critical per-literacy skills and improve achievement test scores. Those outcomes result in savings in important areas – Medicaid, schools, the foster care system, and by extrapolation, the prison system.

**The story of one young mother and her child.** This is the story of a very vulnerable pregnant 15 year old. She was scared and depressed, her boyfriend was abusive, and she had a history of drinking. Her mother learned about the Home Visiting program and brought her in to meet one of the home visiting RNs. The RN formed a relationship with the girl and gained her trust. She gave the girl information on what she needed to do to have a healthy baby. She referred her to a counselor, encouraged her as she made better choices in her life, and helped her to prepare for the baby. The home visiting nurse also provided support to the girl's mother and helped her find community resources. The young woman delivered a full-term, healthy baby boy. The nurse is continuing to work with the young mom so that her parenting will provide her little boy with what he needs for healthy development and a productive future.

*The mission of the Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department is to improve and protect the health of all Lewis and Clark County residents.*

The Lewis & Clark City-County Health Department home visiting program will serve about 600 families this year. We, like the other home visiting programs in the state, provide high quality services, often on a shoestring. An increase in the Medicaid Targeted Case Management reimbursement rate would allow us to provide these effective services to more families. The result will not only be healthier children, but also ultimately a cost savings to the state.

On behalf of Lewis & Clark City-County Health Department, I ask for your support of HB 623. Thank you.

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